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## Websites that promote Montana artists

State of the Arts is compiling a list of Montana-based websites that promote Montana artists and performers. The list includes:

• **www.findartmontana.com:** the site is designed specifically to help visitors locate artists, studios and art as they travel in the state and enjoy the local culture. To participate, fill out the Artist Information Form located on the About Us page.

• **www.montanamusicians.com** and **www.montanabands.com:** Find musicians, collaborate and stay connected with other Montana musicians. Browse by location and price range.

• **www.theartcenterhelena.com:** The Art Center in Helena is a group of artists dedicated to creating and promoting art. Membership (\$35 annually) includes opportunities to exhibit, take classes and workshops and participate in paint-outs and social events.

If you have a website that helps Montana artists promote their work or talents, send the link to [kristi@livelytimes.com](mailto:kristi@livelytimes.com).

# THE ARTIST'S TOOLBOX

## Garage Band Theory offers tips on music theory

By Cynthia Logan

Like love, music is a universal language – a melodic dialect we'd all like to speak fluently. Yet for many, the grammar – music theory – has stood between the desire to read, play and improvise music and doing just that.

Until now. Bozeman musician, teacher and river-rat Duke Sharp's definitive manual, *Garage Band Theory*, bridges the gap for those who understand classical music theory but find it hard to jam with friends, and for jammers who never thought theory could be clear, relevant and practical.

With five CDs to his credit, Sharp has been playing professionally since 1976 and teaching since 2000.

Practical music theory for most musicians consists mainly of basic vocabulary and concepts that allow you to think and speak music. *GBT* is a logically structured gestalt of the process that accomplished players use. Emmy award-winner Rodney Crowell calls it "a must for any musician."

The manual begins with definitions of notes, scales and basic chords, then continues to advanced chords and progressions for blues and jazz, solfège techniques (a music-education method used to teach pitch and sight singing), and even techniques for composition.

Inspirational quotes and chapter quizzes ensure students stick with it and master the material.



Although Sharp is primarily a guitarist, his manual is written for all instruments, since the concepts are identical.

Most of the examples are shown in standard notation for keyboard and orchestral players, as well as in tablature for guitar and mandolin. In addition, there are free audio downloads at [garagebandtheory.com](http://garagebandtheory.com) that let readers hear most of the examples.

Sharp recognizes that a beginner won't always be a beginner and everyone wants

to play better. He's loaded his book with easy-to-understand approaches to playing by ear and traditional theory, using popular examples as well as traditional tunes. "Something for every musician at every level," says Grammy-winner Sam Bush.

"Don't be put off by this giant book," advises Bill Payne, co-founder of Little Feat (recently nominated for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame). "Duke's got the secrets of the universe in here!"

*Garage Band Theory* helps musicians:

- Fill in gaps in your understanding of music theory;
- Enhance all aspects of your playing, and apply the concepts to all instruments;
- Analyze what your favorite artists are playing;
- Get more "bang for your buck" at your regular lesson;
- Anticipate "what's coming next" – a crucial skill in improvisational prowess;
- Take your current ability to the next level; and
- Figure out any chord on any instrument and play basic progressions for any musical genre.

The spiral-bound hardcover, published in June by Cowboy Heaven Publishing in Gallatin Gateway, is available \$50; it's also available in eBook and Kindle versions. Visit [dukessharp.com](http://dukessharp.com).

## ArtPlace America offers funding for creative placemaking

Do you have a sustainable vision for an ambitious project involving arts organizations, artists or designers working in partnerships to increase the vibrancy and diversity of your community?

ArtPlace America works with governments, foundations and other funders to ask that question of organizations and communities across the country. To date, it has funded more than 100 communities, but none, so far, in Montana. The organization's next round of grants opens in September.

Successful creative placemaking places artists and art at the center of planning, execution and activity and leverages the creative potential already present in a place. It supports economic diversity in the community, creates interesting places that capitalize on distinctiveness and contributes to a mix of uses and people that makes places more diverse, more interesting and more active.

According to ArtPlace's principles, creative placemaking fosters connections among people and across cultures, creates a place where business wants to be and convinces people that a place can have a different and better future.

ArtPlace has awarded more than \$56 million to date through 189 grants. Projects include an arts campus in Alaska, residencies in the Sonoran Desert, a sculpture contest and yarnbombing in Loveland, CO, as well as an artist live/work project in Minot, ND.

**S**uccessful creative placemaking places artists and art at the center of planning, execution and activity and leverages the creative potential already present in a place. Have a project in mind? ArtPlace America's next round of grants opens in September: visit [artplaceamerica.org](http://artplaceamerica.org).

To learn more, visit [www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org). You can also sign up for ArtPlace's newsletter to receive information on creative placemaking and the grant process.

## Transferring drawings to a computer

*Dear Digit provides resources, ideas and tips to address digital communications questions from an arts perspective.*

"Dear Digit, I would like to use my own hand-drawn or painted images for outreach materials. You know, like including a sketch in my brochure, and an illustration on my website. But, I have the worst time scanning my artwork and getting it to look right on the computer. What can I do?"

The challenge of transferring drawings from paper to the computer can be a snaggle-toothed gremlin on your shoulder. Scanning can produce an image that looks nothing like what you drew. The paper could be beige or gray, and the colors either too pale or way too bright.

Photographing without an art photography set-up can result in similar issues, along with the ever-present problem of a dark shadow where two pages meet in the spine of a sketchbook. Without advanced photo manipulation skills, you could easily feel like a traditional tools hostage.

However, try out the following tips, and you may find you actually look forward digitizing a sketch.

Four tips that make digitizing fun, rather than drudgery

**1. Consider your tools:** Use a soft pencil or black pen/marker when sketching. These show up better when scanned and photographed than tools that make lighter marks. Use paper that is white – it makes color correction easier later. Use paper that is thick enough that a drawing or text on the back side won't show through, or only use one side of each page. Otherwise, when you scan your image, you may find you have "ghost" sentences and sketches showing through. If you still have "ghost" shadows, put a couple of pieces of white paper between the back of your sketch and the page following it.

**2. Select the color option when you scan.** Even if you are scanning a black and white drawing, scanning in color captures



more information. More information means you can more easily adjust your image in a photo editor after scanning.

**3. Don't adjust contrast and saturation first.** Whether you use Adobe Photoshop or a free editor such as GIMP, resist the urge to use contrast and saturation to adjust your image. Contrast and saturation can skew the colors in strange ways, or make an image look too severe or bright. In most photo editing programs, a function called "Curves" adjusts the brightness and contrast in a much more "realistic" way.

**4. Skip the sketchbook, sometimes.** If you're digitizing handmade images, you may be an old-school type when it comes to adopting technology as an arts solution. All the same, experimenting with digital drawing tools and software (there are so many options, it can be overwhelming) enables you to skip steps 1-3. If you draw directly into your computer, you have already controlled for color, contrast, whiteness of the background, etc.

### Bottom line

Next time you need an illustration for your project, start by looking through your sketchbooks – you may already have the image you need. And, don't ditch your analog tools. Learn to use photo editing and digital drawing like an extra tool (and sometimes a wonderful shortcut).

**Dear Digit is penned Bethann Garraon Merkle, a Choteau, native with a passion for the arts and our dynamic state. She is a communications consultant for nonprofit organizations, small businesses and individuals. Pose your questions online at [www.commnatural.com/deardigit](http://www.commnatural.com/deardigit).**